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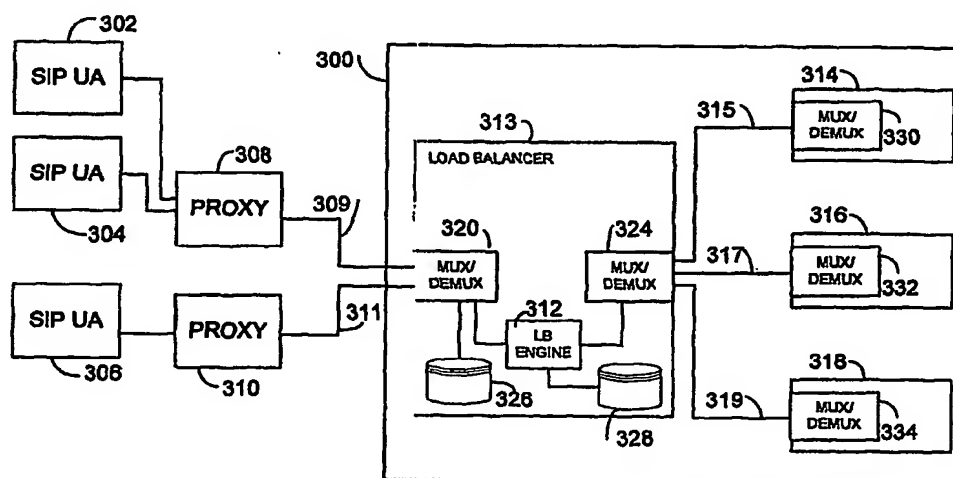
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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR LOAD-BALANCING



(57) Abstract: According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of outing a message, conveyed in stream through a point-to-point connection to a load-balancing element, to one of a plurality of available processing systems each connected to the load-balancing element by separate point-to-point connections, io comprising at the load-balancing element: extracting the message from the stream; detecting in the extracted message the presence of an identifier identifying one of the available processing systems; and where the presence of the identifier is detected, forwarding the message to the processing system identified thereby via the appropriate connection; otherwise determining a destination processing system for processing the message; inserting into the message an identifier identifying the determined destination processing system; and forwarding the message to the processing system via the appropriate connection.

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